754 777 akum • he has become rich by ngbwel), is to be distinguished from ordinary, accidental luck, ma'a, by its lasting character, which soon arouses public suspicion — this is one of the visible symptoms of ngbwel.

754 665 The involuntary nnem was generally put to death, more easily than the conscious sorcerer, who knew how to protect himself. Nevertheless, it was possible to treat a nnem, by means of a very drastic purification involving physiological as well as psychological catharsis and sometimes by real surgical operations /117/, to which in most cases the patient succumbed. Today the European administration usually prevents the execution of beyem, but their relatives often succeed in persuading them to kill themselves. After an epidemic of meningitis at Ambam in 1948, two men and two young women, accused by a bwiti diviner of having caused the death of a dozen children by involuntary ngbwel, threw themselves into the N'Tem within the month. In former times, beyem were burned by being covered with wood in such a way as to prevent both the évu and their nsisim from escaping; they were also drowned or buried alive, preferably in the bed of a stream that had been diverted and was then turned back to its old course after the burial.

754 The conscious nnem is both more and less dangerous. Bound to his évu by a kind of pact, he directs its activity instead of allowing it to kill at random as the unconscious nnem does. Therefore, he is more dangerous to his enemies but less so to his kin, although the concluding and maintenance of the alliance with the évu requires him to sacrifice members of his family.

A nnem with a strong personality, tyi anen a nlem ayet, with great strength and a hard heart, can succeed in really controlling his évu and making it a servant that will procure him wealth and power, rid him of his enemies, and confer supernatural powers on him, such as the ability to be in two places at once /bilocation/, to move objects from a distance /telekinesis/, divination, etc. But ngbwel always remains a dangerous art. First of all, the nnem knows that he is condemned after death to be a white kôn, forbidden to cross the ékanga bekôn, the bridge of the dead, to seek the ancestors, mañ ayat, beyond the sea. There are immediate dangers, in addition to that final condemnation. First, the ever present risk that the évu will dominate the nnem and weaken the latter. Next, the risk of a kind of reaction if the évu attacks a stronger nnem or a mie well protected by a bian provided with white magic. Finally, /there is the risk/ of

754 as a result of the magician's natural spitefulness (ɛ́nɛzam • wickedness, disorder; nkɛ̀ɛ̀ŋ • malevolence, from ɛ́lɔ̀ŋ • an evil act committed expressly and without necessity: a woo bot elan • he who kills for pleasure, ndan of the begôvina • from the German occupation until

•/No footnote is given to this puzzling phrase, but "begôvina" may mean "government people." —Tr./

the present). A protective bian against the beyem can be used against an innocent mie, a magical weapon, a spell against a brother. Such an action may constitute not only an ɛ́som, a delict, but also a nsem, a breaking of taboo, when initiation into magical technique included a prohibition against using it for evil ends. The same thing holds for the use of certain methods, illegal or immoral in themselves, even when the purpose is permissible or morally good: this is the case with the bian for /ensuring/ conjugal fidelity, which consists of the husband having his wife drink his sperm; with that for curing an illness by transferring it to another person (transfer to an animal or plant is permissible); with the use of certain mebian for fertility, etc. The commonest acts of sorcery do not belong in the ngbwel category (and perhaps also in that of the kôn) and would lead simply to a "civil" suit, neither more nor less than a case of assault and battery or a 623 "natural" homicide. Ngbwel, on the contrary, is always a capital crime, provided that the nnem be not too powerful to escape judgment or punishment.

e. Permissible Magic, Divination, Medicine

767 The first aim of licit magic is to fight against sorcerers, especially beyem, but that is only one of its aspects. In fact, it extends to all life's activities, and everyone uses it to a greater or less extent, aside from the specialists, ngengân or ngân, magician, mvimvi'i, diviner, mbibian, healer, and nyia bia, singer (1).

793 1. Among the Ewôndo there used to be a sort of priest, nzomelo, often a chief, who received the first fruits of maize, blessed sowings, and presided over the ancestor cult. (J. B.)

411 Finally, the practitioner is priest, physician, healer, seer, according to whatever function his rank has him perform. Under this title he consults the fates, calls up spirits, etc. In ceremonies of the public cult, for instance, he is priest, seer, rain maker, the acknowledged intermediary between the world of the living and the other world. To sum up, he acts for the welfare of the tribe or of some of its members. In the last capacity he is seen as sacrificer at a child's birth, and as the principal agent in circumcision and in the ceremonies connected with puberty, the initiation of warriors, marriage, and death. He is called in for all illnesses so as to drive away the malevolent spirits who alone cause disease. [415] As physician he first uses magical formulae designed to liberate the good "influences" contained in the remedies he will administer. Next, he dispels evil "spirits" and calls upon favorable spirits, the ancestors of the race, to help him. Only after this does he proceed to give the remedy; then he again calls upon the aid of propitious spirits and dispels the bad ones. ...

Our Fan give the practitioner a special name; he is the ngần, a name common to the whole of Bantu Africa, where the phoneme [sic] may be found throughout the tribes, variously modified as m-gầna, n-gầna, m-hầna, gầna, ngần. ...

[Last paragraph on p. 417 omitted; pp. 418 to mid-420 omitted. --Translator] [420]

454 The sorcerer's social position is easily defined; not only does he have neither rank nor position in the tribe but even to apply the word "sorcerer" ... to a native is more than an insult, it is extremely imprudent. To call a Fan ngân or ngenngân is doing him an honor; if he is not a practitioner, he will give you credit for your good intentions and courtesy. Call him nlem [he who casts bait] and the situation is quite different. First, he will peer around to see if anyone has overheard. If you are alone with him and [421] the stronger, or if he fears retaliation, you will be lucky to escape the gunshot or knife stab he will gladly give you, or the poison he might give you as soon as he has a chance. If there are people around in the village, it would constitute a serious accusation, which might cost him his life. ...

[483]

683 781 695 278 This is the most frequent test among the Fan.

Anyone accused of sorcery, or all those who have succumbed during the first tests, must drink the ordeal poison. This ceremony has been described so often that there is no need to go into it at length.

In the Fan test-poison ordeal three different poisons are used, according to the case in question: the sap of the éñ tree, the grated bark and roots of the oné or onaf; (1) the roots of the

[411]

1. Strychnos onaf: this shrub of the strychnine family, produces the poison used on arrowheads. Puncture is fatal if the poison is fresh, and death ensues within a few moments. If the poison is old, the wound slowly becomes gangrenous. Bromine is a good antidote.

shrub kwéa. (2) These roots are finely shredded, thrown into

2. Strychnos ikaja: this is a common test on the coast, where kwéa, the natives say, is called ikaja, nka, mbonde, ibonde, etc.

boiling water and a reddish liquid is obtained after a few hours of simmering. This highly dangerous brew contains in solution a considerable amount of strychnine and hyoscine.

683 781 695 The ngemgàà, or practitioner, begins by sacrificing a she-goat, with the formulae already indicated. Next, all the villagers assemble, and the practitioner appears in red and white paint, with red parrot feathers and black fish hawk plumes stuck into his hair to form a crown. His only garment consists of a skin tied around his loins, and he wears many bells on his hands and feet. [564] He invokes the protective fetishes of the village, leaps, skips, and howls frenetically. The tom-tom played by one of his acolytes is beaten faster and faster; the practitioner's movements increase in tempo; little by little he seems to move by preference toward a group, the sound of his bells directing him, so he says. Finally he halts abruptly and points in the crowd

7: Trilles--185 M-S (1883-1912) 1912 P169 Fang P169

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695
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to one or more culprits, who are immediately seized and led to the middle of the public square, where one of the practitioner's assistants is waiting with several cups of the liquid.

Those who, in previous ordeals, have asked to be given the poison to drink are also brought up at the same time.

Each in turn empties a cup: the effects vary according to the kind of poison.

Those who drink the *éfàn* quickly develop a violent trembling, which convulses the whole body. They can hardly keep on their feet and would roll on the ground were they not supported by friends. If at this point they are able to urinate copiously, they will gradually recover and survive. However, for years they will have a persistent nervous tremor.

Those who drink the *ikaja* or the *onaï* seem, on the contrary, to be knocked out: they fall down, get up, and fall down again. They survive only if they can vomit the liquid.

Whatever the effect of the poison, all who have undergone the test are led before a log thrown like a bridge over a brook, or sometimes before a plank or a dead tree laid on the ground. They must tread it without help from one end to the other. If they teeter and fall, all the participants leap on them, [565] strike and kill them with clubs, tear them apart and eat them on the spot. However, the sorcerers or those who claim to be are never eaten but are burnt alive. Those who get through to the end of the plank have to pay a large fine. "There's no smoke without fire," seems to be the Fan proverb, translated [539] into their idom as, "*Ké abi fo ve fo* -- there's no rat hole without a rat!"

The totem enters to a fairly large extent into all these tests, either through the practitioner who invokes it or through the unfortunate accused who always have the right, quite illusory for them, to have a [565] piece of the totem boiled with the *élùn* (1) and to invoke it before drinking up the fatal

1. It is not for me to pass judgment on these ceremonies, or to show to what degree the practitioner plays the dominant role, often getting well paid

7: Trilles--106 M-5 (1893-1912) 1912 FH9 Fang FH9

for administering an effective emetic along with the test poison. I shall evaluate these ordeals later when discussing religion.

poison.

Women are not subject to the tests I have just mentioned except sometimes to the nkal test. Among the Fan they do not drink the test poison; they are, in fact, considered as irresponsible and in a state of tutelage. Therefore in cases of serious accusation, a woman's father or husband has to take her place but does not invoke the totem, because it would not be able to act on her behalf since it does not acknowledge the woman.

Only for an accusation of sorcery does a woman have to submit to a test.

She is brought gagged to the middle of the village, two female relatives pull her head back, and the practitioner empties into her eye the sap of a euphorbia called ka. (2) If she comes

2. Euphorbia scandens, of the arboreal euphorbias.

through unhurt, she is innocent. If, on the contrary, as nearly always happens, the eye leaves the socket, she is immediately declared guilty, dragged away into the forest, burnt, and eaten. The accusation frequently arises, and punishment is never delayed.

VIII. Blood Exchange

" 'Brotherhood' (in America, totemisation)," says Mgr. Le Roy. (3) "is relationship through an exchange of blood; if

3. La religion des primitifs [The Religion of Primitive Peoples] op. cit., p. 120.

this is not quite totemism, it is very near to it."